8: Ewers E,G-4,5 (1941-1951) 1971 NF6 Blackfoot NF6

might be ended by a payment of horses to the family of the deceased. Thus it was possible for a wealthy man literally to get away with murder, although he would not enhance his popularity by doing so.

Frequent changes in band allegiance brought together in one residential community people without blood relationship closer than that of second cousins. Marriage between such persons was permitted. In fact, the fathers and mothers of several of my older Blackfoot informants were members of the same band at the time of their marriages.

Young men enjoyed remarkable freedom in their sexual life. They accosted girls while they were alone gathering wood or water on the outskirts of camp. They bragged of their conquests, particularly if they had had an affair with a married woman. Chastity before marriage was more an ideal than a reality for many girls. Yet a girl who earned a reputation for being too free with her favors might have to be satisfied with marrying a poor boy whose future prospects were equally poor.

Faint-hearted lovers, or more aggressive ones whose advances were repulsed by the girls of their choice, sometimes employed love medicines to bring them success in their amorous endeavors. These were secret formulae concocted by specialists for a fee. Because the Cree Indians were famous for these medicines, the Blackfeet referred to love medicine as "Cree Medicine." There were many varieties. One such medicine called for making two little birch bark images, one representing a man and the other a woman. A stick was dipped in the liquid medicine, then touched to the hearts of the male and female figures. This magic was certain to make the girl long for the company of her as yet unsuccessful lover. So powerful were love medicines reputed to be that resistance to them was considered useless.

Fathers and mothers were ambitious for their daughters to marry well. It was not uncommon for the father of a little girl to tell a successful warrior, "When my daughter is old enough, she will be your wife." The marriage might not take place for a decade. Elk-Hollering-in-the-Water told me she was promised

11: Goldfrank E-4,5 (1939) 1966 NF6 Blackfoot NF6
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Men's Societies

575 182 [625] [561] [689] [684] [571] In the buffalo period, these age-graded organizations were the chief agents of tribal discipline.[186] They maintained order in the camp and on the march; they policed the communal hunts; they destroyed the tipi of anyone who pursued the game before the word was given; they publicly ravaged and, at times, killed the unfaithful wife or promiscuous sister of a fellow-member if he so requested. And probably as a corollary to these significant functions, the men's organizations, within their respective age-grades, developed a solidarity that was in striking contrast to the general brittleness of Blood relationships.

572 608 [178] [836] [601] One tie in Blood society is sacred—the tie between a man and his *taka*, his special friend. The choice of a boon companion is made in childhood; it is upheld throughout life. It is determined by age, by propinquity, and social position. In the past, *taka* shared the trials of hunt and war and a woman's favors before marriage. Today of necessity the last alone remains a test of friendship, but *taka* still use each other's kinship terms: the mother of one becomes the mother of the other, the sister of one, the sister of the other, and they assume the responsibilities implied in these and similar relationships.

575 572 561 Within the men's societies, alternate grades know each other as "fighters," but those who are members at the same time call each other *taka*. The term bespeaks the mutual loyalty expected of them. As a group they buy into a society; as a group they sell out. Wissler writes, "this companionship feature seems one of the fundamental conceptions in the Blackfoot scheme."[187]

575 182 178 [561] [796] But while the members or *taka* preserve a solid front within their age-grade, the societies themselves retain little of their former importance. There are no more communal hunts; there are no more protected marches. Only at the Sun Dance, when the bands gather to raise the sun pole and make their transfers do the societies operate as of old. For the rest, they function as social and ceremonial entities, interested primarily in feasting and exchange.

575 [162] In 1939, a sampling of 305 adult males (practically the entire adult male population) showed that, at some time, 205 had been members of the Pigeons, 189 of the Brave Dogs, 68 of the Braves, 23 of the Black Seizers, 25 of the Crow Carriers, 4 of the Crazy Dogs, 130 of the Horns, 1 of the

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[186] For a full discussion of these societies, see Wissler, *Blackfoot Societies*, pp. 365–460; for age grades and police power, pp. 365–70; for general pattern, p. 424 ff.
[187] *Ibid.*, p. 428.

11: Goldfrank E-4,5 (1939) 1966 NF6 Blackfoot NF6
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joined the horns as he was then living with the Blood. For this he paid a horse, a gun, a saddle, and many blankets.[146]

Ordinary memberships in the Horn today bring no less. Many bring considerably more. The society's transfer ceremony was the most spectacular event at the Sun Dance.

Dance Societies[148]

A number of these associations still flourish on the reserve. Their membership problems are not formidable since their purpose is social and their fees nominal, mostly contributions of food at the time of the dance.

The Women's Society[147]

The *Matoki*, as the Women's Society is called, raised their lodge at the Sun Dance and, assisted by six men—four singers and two messengers—climaxed a four-day ceremony by imitating buffalo driven into the park. In 1939, fifteen women participated, all of them well beyond their prime. The leader's pole which, according to Mr. Duvall, cost "twelve horses and an appropriate amount of other property" has not changed hands for forty years, although "like the horns and other societies the members sell, or transfer, to others usually . . . at the same time."[148]

The Sun Lodge

With the exception of three years, the Sun Lodge has been raised annually since 1910, sixteen women vowing it, sometimes two of them jointly:[149]

1 woman vowed the Sun Lodge but did not put it up
10 women put up the Sun Lodge once (one year two jointly)
1 woman put up the Sun Lodge twice
2 women put up the Sun Lodge three times (one, once with a woman who raised it five times)
1 woman put up the Sun Lodge four times
1 woman put up the Sun Lodge five times (four times since 1929 alone and once with one of the women who raised it three times)

The demand for chastity before marriage and fidelity after may have eliminated a goodly number, but one informant felt sure that that was not

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[146] Wissler, *Blackfoot Societies*, p. 426 ff.
[148] *Ibid.*, p. 451 ff.
[147] *Ibid.*, p. 430 ff.
[148] *Ibid.*, pp. 433, 432.
[149] Harry D. Biele, Field Notes. For a full discussion of the Sun Dance and the building of the Sun Lodge, see Wissler, *The Sun Dance of the Blackfoot Indians*, pp. 220-270.

11: Goldfrank E-4,5 (1939) 1966 NF6 Blackfoot NF6
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the only reason for the limited participation: "There are a lot of women on this reserve who could put up a Sun Lodge, but don't want to." While their virtue might be unassailable, she was convinced that they either could not muster enough wealth, or did not care to meet the considerable demands for buying the *natoas* bundle,[170] putting up the lodge and staging a give-away.

The rewards of chastity unsupported by property are limited indeed. In 1939, the Sun Lodge vower only gave two horses away. The transferrer asked by an interested bystander how he "had come out," laughed and answered, "I never did as badly as this time." The crowd, well-aware that there was to be no give-away, showed little interest in the proceedings. When the great moment arrived, the sun pole could barely be raised; most of the men preferred to dance the Owl Dance, that aid to flirtation and liaison. But the conspicuous display at the transfer of Horn Society memberships two days earlier had drawn a large and expectant company.

Bundles[171]

The costs, limited memberships available, and unappealing demands of such a society as the Crazy Dogs were clearly deterrents to participation, but nevertheless an impressive proportion of the adult male population bought into the cheaper (younger) organizations, and for special reasons into the Horns. The ownership of medicine pipes and beaver bundles is much more restricted. Only thirty, or less than one-tenth of the group sampled, bought pipes at all:

25 bought 1 pipe
1 bought 2 pipes
2 bought 3 pipes
2 bought 4 pipes

Only six have bought beaver bundles:[172]

3 bought 1 bundle
3 bought 2 bundles

Of the first group, one had also purchased a medicine pipe; of the second, one had purchased four.

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[170] It is possible to vow the Sun Lodge without buying the *natoas* bundle. Cf. Wissler, *Blackfoot Sun Dance*, pp. 241, 246.

[171] Many other types than those discussed here were in circulation. For full descriptions, see Wissler, *Blackfoot Bundles*, passim.

[172] Wissler (*Blackfoot Bundles*, p. 169), writes in 1912: "At present beaver bundles are to be found among the divisions except the Blood, among whom they have not been particularly popular for a long time."

11: Goldfrank E-4,5 (1939) 1966 NF6 Blackfoot NF6 Blood

joke with your brother's, it means you are in earnest." The only Blood confined to the insane asylum, whose case was not complicated by physical causes, attempted to murder his wife because he believed she was having intercourse with a ghost. Many a husband, approaching his end, threatens his mate with death, for only when she accompanies him on his final journey can he be sure that in the next world he alone will possess her.

Husbands, who need proof of good behavior and who can afford to pay for it, may insist that their wives "vow the tongues"[159] or put up the Sun Lodge, for only those who are chaste before and faithful after marriage can do so with impunity. Sometimes, however, the pressure may be so great, that a woman must take a chance. Urged by her husband who remained unconvinced concerning her virginity at marriage, Weasel Girl distributed the tongues at the Sun Dance. Her husband's uncle, noting that she failed to mention the names of any men she had rebuffed, suspected her avowal, and threw his piece of meat to a dog at his side. Later that evening, this dog was shot while making off with a chicken. His alertness and caution had saved him, the uncle was certain, from a sure and untimely death. That Weasel Girl, herself, only lived three years longer was further evidence that she had lied.

Suspicion is not always without cause, as it may well have been in this instance. The most casual encounter, the social dances in the dance hall, even the Sun Dance, offer innumerable opportunities for illicit adventures, and these are not missed. Many a husband has found his wife with her lover. But so obsessed are they by their suspicions, that every possibility of adultery immediately becomes a fact.

Informal wife-lending among the Blood is inconceivable whether to a casual friend[160] or a life-long "*taka*." Yet this act which cannot be tolerated in daily living, is ritually sanctioned when the sorcery roots are purchased by members in the Horn Society.[161] At this time, the wife of the buyer deposits her clothes in her husband's lap. Protected by a buffalo robe, she is taken to the tipi of the seller and ceremonially painted. She then "goes

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[159] Wissler, *Blackfoot Sun Dance*, p. 234 ff.

[160] Henry in his Journal (vol. 2, p. 526) states that the Blackfoot were a "nuisance in offering women." Wissler (*Social Life*, p. 10) observes that he believes these women were captives.

[161] Among the neighboring Cree the opposite situation existed. They practised informal wife exchange. D. G. Mandelbaum (*The Plains Cree*, p. 246) writes: "This relationship reflected considerable honor upon the participants, for only the most stout-hearted men could become intimate companions of their wives' paramours." But in a ceremony called Sitting Up Until Morning (*ibid.*, p. 228) although the "warriors of one society issued invitations to the wives or daughters of the members of other societies" and "at dawn, the men washed and painted the women's faces,

33: Bradley G-3 (1871-1877) 1923
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836 But while the faithless wife was thus exposed to punish-
589 ment and obloquy, it was different with the unmarried woman. She was regarded as mistress of her own actions and no shame attached to her for unchastity. Many young women in every village carried on a business of common prostitutes without suffering any loss of standing. On the contrary, they were received everywhere on terms of social equality, and often subsequently became faithful wives.
837 A similar immunity from punishment or popular censure was enjoyed by the wife whose lewdness was with the consent of or by the direction of her husband. Such cases were not infrequent, sometimes from a desire for gain, again as a point of hospitality to a favored guest, particularly when the host, as was very common with the Blackfeet, enjoyed a plurality of wives.

INTRODUCTION OF THE YOUNG MAN AS A WARRIOR

701 Usually about the age of sixteen the young man is re-
702 garded as a warrior. He reaches this dignity by no ceremony, but it is tacitly admitted by virute of his strength, hardihood and ability and readiness to meet the foe in
[756] combat. When he first determines to seek the war path, his father usually procures the services of a medicine man, who paints him with mystic devices and mutters over him an invocation for courage, success in war, and a safe return, after which his father presents him with weapons
[729] and if able, a horse, and he is ready for the field. As a
[555] rule, the young men are very ambitious to distinguish themselves in war and seek every opportunity to win the
[883] honor that war-like deeds can alone secure. Not infrequently, however, they are great drones, lounging in the village, participating neither in the war nor the chase until they take wives, when perforce they must exert themselves to live.

AGE OF MARRIAGE

584 About the age of twenty-five the young warrior begins to
[582] think of having a wife. Having selected the woman he
[583] would thus honor, he loses no time in employing the civilized device of a tedious and uncertain courtship, but